

TESTIMONY

I was arrested by the Civil Guard in Hernani on March 30th, and I spent five days in their custody.

March 30, 2001, Friday: The arrest took place at 9:10 a.m. as I was leaving my house. Three people approached me, showed me their badges, identified themselves, and put me in a car. They told me we were going to Intxaurrondo. "You know where we're going, right? To Intxaurrondo! You know what that means, don't you?" We arrived in Intxaurrondo (they forced me to keep my head down the entire car ride), they took me into a building, and placed a blindfold over my eyes that prevented me from seeing. They took my fingerprints, but I don't know what paper they put them on since I was blindfolded. A woman came and started searching me. There were two men next to me, and they forced me to take off my bra while they undressed me from the waist up. Then the two men started groping my breasts, saying things like, "Look at those tits." I struggled and started gagging. They began laughing and, half-shouting, told me not to act like that. After telling me to get dressed, they read me my rights. They took me out of there, put me in a car, and drove me to Hernani to search my home.

They stopped the car in front of my building and took me home with my sweater over my head (before taking me out of the car they removed the blindfold.) There were many Civil Guard officers there, as well as the judge and the court clerk. They searched the entire house in their presence and mine. They also

searched the storage room, breaking down the door to do so. Before we arrived at the house for the search, they told me I would have to walk in front when we entered and to be careful, because if anyone was there, I would see what happened (they said this in a threatening tone).

When the search was over, they handed me the search warrant to sign; I refused. The judge and the clerk gave me a copy, but the Civil Guard took it away, and I never saw it again. They pulled my sweater back over my head, took me out of the house, and put me in the car—it must have been around 3:00 PM—and the transfer to Madrid began immediately. There were five of us in the car: four Civil Guard officers and myself. I was in the back seat, between two of them. I could see the faces of the two in the front and the one to my left. As soon as I got into the car, the leader said to me, "Right, that's the end of all that pansy talk about rights, judges, and bullshit; from now on, you're going to find out what real trouble is. Do you hear me, you fucking bitch?" Then he struck me on the head. From that point on, they blindfolded me, and the blows to the head, insults, and threats continued. Except for the driver, the other three struck me hard on the head. The officer to my right took out a device he had between his legs and began administering electric shocks to my right side. Meanwhile, the one to my left grabbed a plastic bag and placed it over my head, cutting off my air and nearly suffocating me. The blows to my head from the officer in the front were continuous.

Furthermore, the officer to my right was groping my

breasts. All of this—the electrodes, the bag, the rough handling and blows—went on incessantly amidst screams, insults, and threats. I lost consciousness at least twice and urinated on myself. Before passing out, I managed to tear the bag with my teeth a couple of times, at which point they would put another one on me. Eventually, seeing that I kept tearing the bags, they decided to put three of them on me at once.

They kept telling me that what they were doing was mild, that when we got to Madrid I would find out what real suffering was—that the guys there were animals. The one on my right said that his...

The device's batteries ran out; they changed them and started up with the shocks again. A couple of times, the person sitting to my left took the device and administered shocks to me as well—on my left side. It was a constant barrage: the electrodes, the blows, the bag, the rough handling, the shouting, the insults, and the threats—all happening at once.

They stopped the car (at what they said was a gas station), where we stayed for two or three minutes—a brief respite from the torture. One of them got out and returned with more bags, complaining that I kept tearing them all but saying it didn't matter—they had plenty of bags to use until they killed me. We set off again, and it was more of the same: the bag, electrodes, insults, groping, shouting, blows...

One of them told me they were going to do the same thing to me that they had done to Geresta or

Basajaun—take me up a mountain and kill me. They stopped the car (telling me we were up in the mountains) and placed a pistol in my hands. I didn't want to take it; they kept hitting me while forcing me to hold it. They told me to get out of the car and start running—saying that if I did, they would shoot and kill me, then claim they had to shoot me because I'd tried to escape, which was why I ended up dead. They forced me to take the pistol and get out of the car. They screamed at me to run, but I couldn't even move, so I didn't. They shoved me back into the car while one of them said, "Come on, come on, get in the car—people are coming; get in, people are coming. You got lucky, you bastard, because people were coming; otherwise, we would have killed you right here." From that point on, they got the car moving, and it was more of the same: the bag, electrodes, groping, shouting, blows, threats... They hurled all kinds of abuse at me—calling me a "whore," "fat," and so on—saying things like, "Look, just look at the state you're in... and this is only the beginning... wait until we get to Madrid... you're going to shit yourself... it'll be much worse there... the guys waiting for you there are animals... you'll see... we can't work comfortably here in the car, but wait until we get there—there's plenty of room and space and time to work on you properly... we're going to kill you little by little."

We arrived in Madrid. I would later learn that we were at the Civil Guard headquarters. They led me down a hallway, and six or seven Civil Guard officers

gave me a terrible beating. They told me it was "my welcome." While they were hitting me—mostly blows to the head—my blindfold shifted, and I could see that there were six or seven men: the ones who had transported me there, plus two or three others wearing balaclavas. The beating was brutal but very brief; it lasted only about twenty seconds. They struck me with their hands and with a hard object.

They carried me bodily to a holding cell and left me there for about fifteen minutes before coming back for me; they took me down a hallway and up some stairs to a room on the floor above. Before taking me into the room, they removed my blindfold. A man told me he was the forensic doctor and showed me his ID card. But I was very nervous and didn't believe him; I thought he was a Civil Guard officer putting on an act. He asked if I wanted him to examine me, but I flinched every time he came near because I was so terrified. I was trembling and unable to speak; I was weeping and shaking. He tried to calm me down, but I didn't believe him—I was scared to death. I spent about half an hour in that room, sitting on a chair, trembling, unable to speak, and weeping.

Around 7:30 PM, the forensic doctor left (I would later learn he was a real doctor), and I was taken back downstairs. As soon as the doctor left, they put the blindfold back on me. From that moment until noon the following day—a span of sixteen hours—this is what happened: I was held in what they called "Room A," where there were many men—about ten, I estimate. They took turns torturing me. They

repeatedly placed bags over my head until I was on the verge of suffocation; one of them would hold me from behind so I wouldn't fall to the floor when I lost consciousness. The blows to my head were constant—delivered with a hand, a telephone directory (or so they told me), or a rolled-up magazine (which I could actually see). They tied my wrists and ankles, using foam padding to prevent marks. Then they wrapped me in a blanket and bound me tight with packing tape. They laid me face-up on the floor (with only my head exposed), and a Civil Guard positioned himself over me...

...and they suffocate me over and over again with the bag. They shove the bag into my mouth, down to my throat, and cover my nose until I gag and retch. They take turns doing this—in fact, they take turns doing all sorts of things to me. They strip me naked (doing so violently, as I no longer have any strength left) and form a circle around me, leaving me in the middle. They force me to do two types of push-ups: one kind where I raise and lower my body, and another where I raise and lower my arms. While I do the push-ups, they strike me on the head and begin touching my body—specifically my chest, buttocks, and groin. They place a stick in my hands and tell me they are going to shove it up my ass; they force me onto all fours on the blanket and slap me...

This goes on for sixteen hours straight, amidst constant shouting, insults, and threats. They take turns, telling me, "Now the *real* bad guys are coming..." They constantly threaten to rape me; one

of them unbuckles his belt and unzips his fly (I can't see it because of the blindfold, but I can feel it) and tells me, "We're going to screw you now—one by one, we'll take turns..." and so on. There are also constant threats against my family—threats that they will be raped... One of them pretends to speak on the phone, giving orders to arrest my mother and bring her there (I would later learn this was a lie). I hear screaming, and they tell me it's a female friend of mine and that she is being tortured too (I would later find out that was a lie as well). They tell me they're going to take me out of there by helicopter and throw me out; they tell me I have to learn whatever they say, and that otherwise they'll keep this up until they kill me... They threaten me with the "bathtub" and the "rack," telling me those are the only things left for me to experience... They shout questions at me, telling me over and over the answers they want to hear, and when I say something they don't like, they hit me harder; they tell me the answers so I'll memorize them.

During these 16 hours, they take me three times to what they call "Room B." It's next to "Room A." Each time they take me there, they force me to sit in a chair and begin...

They begin to interrogate me and tell me what I have to answer. They tell me that if I don't give the answers they want, they will continue the treatment I've been receiving up to that point. And every time I fail to give one of their answers, they take me back to

“Room A” and continue torturing me. When I am in “Room B,” I recognize—by their voices—the same people who are usually in the other room. In this room, they remove my blindfold, and I can recognize the men from the car among them, because the others have their faces covered. All this takes place between Friday afternoon and Saturday midday

Saturday, March 31, 2001: Around noon, I was taken to the holding cell, and about fifteen minutes later, I was taken upstairs to see the forensic doctor. I still had doubts about him—I didn't know if he was a real doctor—but I was shattered and took the risk of telling him about the treatment I was being subjected to. I thought that if he really was a doctor, he would help me, and if he wasn't... well, honestly, it was impossible for them to do anything worse to me than what I was already suffering. I was terrified, but I couldn't take it anymore. My head felt like it was going to explode; I had terrible neck pain and extreme physical exhaustion. I began showing him the marks left by the application of the electrodes. Upon seeing me, he said he was going to take me to the hospital. He left the room, and another doctor entered—one who identified himself as a Civil Guard doctor—but he couldn't object, and I was taken to the hospital emergency room. They kept me there until around 7:00 PM, running various tests.

First, an internal medicine doctor examined me and documented my injuries; I told him they had been caused by the Civil Guard through their treatment—

electrodes, blows, and so on. He examined me and ordered various tests: a CT scan, X-rays of the marks left by the electrodes, and a biopsy of the injured skin. When the doctor returned, he referred me to an orthopedist, as I would likely need a neck brace. After examining me, the orthopedist...

The doctor, without paying much attention to me, prescribed some pills and that was it (paracetamol). The forensic doctor told me he would send the reports and evidence to the judge, but to this day I still haven't heard anything about that evidence. When we left the hospital, they took me back to the Civil Guard station. As soon as I got out of the car, one of them whispered in my ear, "You're going to regret this!" They took me straight to "Room B," without a mask, sat me in a chair, and the chief was sitting behind a table in front of me. There were more Civil Guards behind me, but I could only see three because every time I looked back, they yelled at me not to look at them.

The chief started talking to me and told me they were very angry with me. He told me that from now on I had to do what they told me and that I had to say exactly what they told me to say, word for word. He told me I had three options.

If I don't give a police statement, they'll continue as they have been, that is, torturing me relentlessly: the bag, electrodes, beatings... They say the boss above

him knows perfectly well how they're treating me, and that they have no problem with that.

If I go up to give a statement, but don't say word for word what they tell me to say, the treatment will be worse than what I've been suffering so far; they'll make me suffer until I die in the three days that remain.

If I give the statement as they've told me, they won't lay a hand on me and they'll let me sleep after the statement.

They tell me I have no rights and that I have to choose one of three options. I'm physically and psychologically broken, and I tell them I'll give the statement they want. They force me to repeat it over and over until I memorize it, and they take me to another room, with my eyes closed and looking at the floor. Half my body is twisted because of the neck pain; I can't look down without twisting my neck. There's a man sitting in this room who tells me he's the public defender. They seat me in a chair that's...

In front of me stands a table with chairs where the instructor—the man who until then had told me he was the boss—and another man typing on a computer are seated. I recite what they have forced me to memorize, driven by fear.

Sunday, April 1, 2001: In the morning, I undergo an interrogation in "Room B" that lasts about four hours. They force me to learn new things and tell me I must give another statement that afternoon. Once again, amidst threats, they present me with the same three options from the day before... then they take me back to the holding cell and give me a painkiller. I take it because the pain in my head and neck is unbearable. At midday, the forensic doctor comes to examine me; he sees that I am physically better, but I do not dare tell him I am being pressured to give the statement they want. I am terrified that if I say anything, they will revert to the treatment I received before being taken to the hospital.

In the afternoon, I give my second police statement. As instructed, I recite exactly what they made me memorize. The court-appointed lawyer notices I am unwell—two Civil Guards have to help me up from the chair—and asks if something is wrong. Although I feel as bad as I possibly could, I tell him I am fine.

I spend the remaining two days just like the Sunday: taken from the cell to "Room B," memorizing what they want me to say, and then giving another statement... all of this accompanied by constant threats.

The forensic doctor visits every day, but I still do not dare tell him about the threats; I do not want the treatment to go back to how it was during the first two days... During these final days, I am subjected to psychological torture, including threats and the like. On Sunday, while I am in the cell, two Civil Guards burst in shouting and strike me on the head, but

aside from that incident, I am not physically tortured during the remaining three days. Even though they offer me food

...I am barely eating anything, so I feel physically very weak.

On Tuesday night, the chief enters the cell; he doesn't shout, but speaks to me, threatening me again. He says that the next day I am to be taken to the National Court and that I must stand by the statements I gave to the police. He warns that if I don't do as he says, they will arrest my family—my mother—and treat her just as they treated me, and furthermore, they will charge her with collaboration. But he adds that it is up to me to prevent that from happening. Still terrified, I tell him I will do whatever he says.

At six o'clock on Tuesday morning, I am told to change my clothes, and the chief threatens me again, insisting I testify before the judge. They put me in a van and transport me to the National Court.

Beforehand, the forensic doctor examines me again.

The judge had previously ordered me held incommunicado, without my chosen lawyer present. By then, I know that after spending five days in the hands of the Civil Guard, I will not be going back to them; I refuse to testify because my chosen lawyer is not present, and I describe the treatment I endured.

I receive the committal order and am taken to Soto del Real prison. Another medical report documenting my injuries is drawn up, as the marks from the torture I suffered are visible.